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# *What's New in the Forest?*

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# What's New in the Forest?

National Forests are alive with change. Environmental awareness, public advocacy, marketplace demands, and forestry research findings keep us busy adapting to renewed interest in National Forest Multiple-Use Management.

We entered the 1990's with Forest Plan blueprints designed with an eye towards the future. Our goal? To maintain the stability of forest ecosystems and the communities that depend on National Forests for quality outdoor experiences, forest products, clean water, and clean air. We are at our best when we learn to mimic nature's change and renewal cycle so multiple-use benefits are available today and for future generations.

What's new and different is our effort to adapt more quickly to new information. It's called "New Perspectives" and focuses on people and communities, the forest ecosystem, and landscape management.

## People and Communities

Learning together about National Forest management means going beyond public announcements and analysis of people's comments, it means inviting people and communities to become full partners with us. It includes the willingness to build new and improved understandings about forests and their ability to meet people's demands. It includes a willingness to take risks to seek new information, to endorse current practices that serve us well while continuing to ask needed questions, and to support the search for improved ways to manage National Forests.

Let's learn together about our values, the forest, and new ideas, thereby lessening the need to settle differences through appeals and lawsuits.

## The Forest Ecosystem

Like people, there are young, middle-aged, and old forest conditions that are interdependent. Forests are complex systems where all conditions in Nature's change-and-renewal cycle are found.

Old-growth forests, for example, contain many parts such as large live trees, dead trees called snags, and dead logs on the forest floor and in streamcourses.

Research has established the importance of retaining the natural features of the forest ecosystem. One new way we do business is to retain these natural ecosystem features through our multiple-use management activities. *This brochure will share with you some of our findings about nutrient cycling, woody debris in stream courses, and wildlife trees.*







### • Nutrient Cycling

Tree branches and logs found on the forest floor were once viewed as “waste wood,” but now we know they have several valuable purposes. They cycle nutrients back into forest ecosystems, serve as water reservoirs, shelter tree seedlings, and give animals homes. In short, the right amount of logs and woody debris help the next forest community get started.



### • Woody Debris in Streams

Large woody debris are important parts of stream course ecosystem function. They regulate stream flow, stream structure, and fish habitat. Current National Forest standards and practices reflect this knowledge so that this needed woody debris stays on site.



A background image showing the dark silhouettes of several evergreen trees, likely Douglas firs, against a light, hazy sky. The trees are of varying heights and are positioned across the frame, with some in the foreground and others further back.

## • **Wildlife Trees**

Live and dead trees are used by many species of birds and other wildlife. In the Willamette National Forest, wildlife species such as pileated woodpeckers, western bluebirds, Pacific Tree frogs, salamanders, and red-breasted sapsuckers use different-aged forests. We assure future generations of such species by leaving proper combinations of live and dead trees while also assuring that food sources are nearby and available.

## • **Natural Disturbance Patterns**

Through natural disturbances such as fire and forest pests, nature engineers her own changing patterns which assure that forests are forever renewed. Forest researchers are discovering that natural pest outbreaks, fires, and storms leave biological legacies behind such as living and dead trees of all sizes.

By observing these ecosystem characteristics, we can learn and apply multiple-use management to assure habitats for plants and animals that are healthy and functional. We are now assuring we retain these biological legacies as well as minimize impacts of forest vegetative treatments.





## Landscape Management

Earlier studies focused on species like elk and deer who sought a combination of forest conditions that we now know is different from the needs of species like spotted owl. Our challenge is to know enough not to threaten the existence of wildlife and plant species.

In some cases we may be reaching thresholds where wildlife species cannot freely move about the forest. As we analyze landscape relationships and learn about the importance of free movement by plants and animals throughout the forest landscape, we are finding better ways to practice multiple-use management.

## Conclusion – What's New?

Our most valuable lessons have been to apply what we learn more quickly and to keep an open mind as we learn more about forest ecosystems.

What else is *New in the Forest*? Learning more about the people and community who are important components of healthy ecosystems.

Stay in touch with us. Be a partner. We are learning new things every day.

## For more information, please contact:

- Forest Supervisor  
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- District Ranger  
Blue River Ranger District – (503) 822-3317
- Cascade Center for Ecosystem Management –  
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